
More line of duty losses leave us mourning

Last November, we held our first meeting of the newly-revamped Texas EMS Magazine Editorial Board. One young woman, a flight medic, was particularly enthusiastic about EMS and her role in helping shape the future of her profession. Her husband and mother were medics, she told us, and she thought she had the perfect job.

On Sunday, June 8, I blinked in disbelief at my computer screen as I read the names of the PHI helicopter crew killed in a crash outside Huntsville early that morning. Paramedic and editorial board member Stephanie Waters, 27, was killed along with crew members Wayne Kirby, 64, pilot; and Jana Bishop, 28, a licensed paramedic and nurse. Also killed was the patient, David Disman, 58. Our deepest sympathies go to the families and friends of those lost, and to all our colleagues in Bryan, where the helicopter is stationed; in Montgomery County, which dispatches the helicopters; and to all EMS and hospital personnel in Huntsville and Houston. We will not forget.

Those who die in the line of duty are honored each year at Texas EMS Conference at the Tuesday Awards Luncheon. Waters, Bishop and Kirby will join three others this year in being added to the Texas Hall of Honor.

The Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council (GETAC) meets August 13-15 at the Hilton Austin Airport. The Council will again be discussing the restructuring, although now it will be more of a fine-tuning of what was decided at the last meeting. In a nutshell, the Council will continue as it has been with the addition of two more committees: Disaster/Emergency Preparedness Committee and a Cardiac Care Committee. In addition, there will be more accountability for the committee chairs. You can read the Recap of the last meeting on page 28. We're working on securing dates for GETAC for 2009; unfortunately, the hotels in Austin are still running at a high occupancy, which limits the number of hotels with open meeting space willing to give us a government rate on the sleeping room. We'll let you know as soon as we do.

It's not always a hurricane that triggers our activation of a memorandum of agreement for our EMS providers. Indeed, in April, it was children of a religious sect accused of child abuse. Next time, it could be a serious outbreak of flu, a devastating flood ... or a hurricane. We need more providers to sign the MOA. The advantage is providers who sign the MOA will have guaranteed payment from the state – at a guaranteed rate. We're heading into what is traditionally the most active time for hurricanes. To find out more about MOAs, go to our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems.

And finally, we're looking forward to the conference in Fort Worth and hope you are, too! Turn to page 20 for a listing of many of the one- and two-hour workshops offered this year. And don't forget to make your hotel reservations early as the prime places fill up fast.

See you all at GETAC in August.



FROM THIS SIDE



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